

“Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights,” adopted by ALA Council on June 27, 2017, included definitions that also have been incorporated into the ALA policy manual.

“**Equity**” takes difference into account to ensure a fair process and, ultimately, a fair outcome. Equity recognizes that some groups were (and are) disadvantaged in accessing educational and employment opportunities and are, therefore, underrepresented or marginalized in many organizations and institutions. Equity, therefore, means increasing diversity by ameliorating conditions of disadvantaged groups.

“**Diversity**” can be defined as the sum of the ways that people are both alike and different. When we recognize, value, and embrace diversity, we are recognizing, valuing, and embracing the uniqueness of each individual.

“**Inclusion**” means an environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully; are valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, and perspectives; have equal access to resources and opportunities; and can contribute fully to the organization’s success.

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/EDI>

CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING ‘INCLUSIVE’ LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS

1. The characters should be portrayed as individuals; not as representatives of a group. Characters should transcend stereotypes and represent universal characteristics that reflect the ways in which we are connected. Readers should be able to recognize characters through text and illustrations.
2. Culture should be accurately portrayed. This may involve adult checking resources and background information to a particular text. Social issues and problems should be depicted frankly, accurately, and without oversimplification. Culture should entail more than 4 Fs: food, folklore, fashion and festivals.
3. Setting should be authentic. The factual and historical details should be accurate. Select materials that reflect cultural complexities rather than re-enforcing stereotypes.
4. “Mirrors and Windows” are important for an inclusive collection: books and media where students can see themselves reflected, as well as where they can learn about others.
5. The collection should build understanding and respect for each child’s cultural group identities, as well as respect for and tolerance of cultural differences, including differences of gender, language, race, ethnicity, religion, region, and disabilities.
6. You are most likely to have older, even classic, titles that have outdated and hurtful stereotypes. It is time to update and include other books that provide more accurate depictions of the same groups or cultures, e.g., *Little House on the Prairie* with *Birchbark House* and pair them together for two different viewpoints of the same time period.

7. As you review your collection and continue to build, keep in mind that books and media with characters of color should not always be primarily about race or prejudice. Be aware that books featuring black characters are not all about slavery. Books with Latino characters should focus on topics other than immigration.
8. Look for books where nonwhite characters solve their problems without intervention from whites. Make sure that you have many books with nonwhite main characters and that they are depicted on the cover of the books. Sidekicks are fine, and usually fun(!), but be aware of the race(s) of sidekicks to main characters that are not of the same race. Your collection should reflect that these characters are equals.
9. Story and plot should be more than a vehicle to express some “truth” about a culture or experience. Remember that those characteristics that make a book memorable whether it is a journey or quest, fiction or nonfiction, is where the child places herself/himself in those pages.

Resources Used:

Boyd, Fenice B., Causey, Lauren L. & Galda, Lee. (2015). Culturally Diverse Literature Enriching Variety in an Era of Common Core State Standards. *The Reading Teacher*, 68(5), 378–387. doi: [10.1002/trtr.1326](https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1326)

Cooperative Children’s Book Center
School of Education
University of Wisconsin-Madison
<http://cbbc.education.wisc.edu/books/multicultural.asp>

Joan Ganz Cooney Center Blog Post
<http://joanganzcooneycenter.org/2017/05/08/a-checklist-for-evaluating-diverse-childrens-media/>

Lee and Low Books
<https://www.leeandlow.com>

Program: “Diversive vs. Inclusive Library” –November 10, 2017
NYLA Conference, Saratoga Springs, NY

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